



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

April 16, 2010

The Honorable Darrell Issa
Ranking Member, House Committee on
Oversight and Government Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Issa:

We received your March 24 letter regarding open and unimplemented recommendations made by the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) to the Postal Service. Specifically, you requested we identify: (1) the current number of open and unimplemented recommendations; (2) for those recommendations that have an estimated cost savings associated with them, the recommendation, date first recommended, and total estimated cost savings we believe is obtainable if the recommendation is implemented; (3) what our office considers to be the three most important open and unimplemented recommendations; and (4) the number of recommendations our office deems accepted and implemented during the time period January 5, 2009, to the present. Our Office of Audit will provide this information to you in a separate letter.

The second portion of your letter solicited my opinion about improving the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended (IGA). The work of the committee during the last session on passage of the Inspector General Reform Act of 2008 is much appreciated. Although the Reform Act brought significant improvements, there remain some relatively minor adjustments that would further strengthen the ability of the Offices of the Inspector General to protect the federal government against fraud, waste and abuse. My suggestions fall into two broad categories:

- Ensuring IG Independence
 - Remove existing term limits for existing IGs
 - Define nature of reporting relationship to heads of agencies
- Enhancing OIG Funding Processes
 - Access to Forfeiture Funds
 - Removal from federal budget process for OIGs not funded by Treasury Fund

- Enhancing OIG Funding
 - Access to Forfeiture Funds
 - Removal from federal budget process for OIGs not funded by Treasury Fund

Ensuring IG Independence

Term Limits - Prior to the enactment of the Reform Act, there was discussion of including defined periods of service (term limits) for all Inspectors General to help ensure their independence. That was not ultimately included in the Reform Act and, instead, the Act defines the circumstances under which an IG may be removed from office. It is my opinion that the Reform Act's approach to protecting IGs from retaliatory removal or political considerations is more effective than term limitations. In fact, I believe defined term limitations present the very real risk that IGs could be pressured by agency heads to change their course of conduct, and by agency heads holding an approaching end of term as an incentive/sword to attempt to influence an IG.

However, two current IG positions of which I am aware still have defined terms of service. Those are my own position with the U.S. Postal Service and that of the IG for the Peace Corps. I have not personally experienced the pressure to which I refer, and am not aware that the IG for the Peace Corps has either; however, it is in these circumstances, where there is no current "fire," that it would be best to consider a change. Removing these and other term limits about which I am not aware could be accomplished by inserting language into the IGA, notwithstanding any other laws concerning term limitations, stating that a DFE IG serves at the pleasure of the head of the agency, but may only be removed in the manner and for causes already defined in the IGA, as amended.

Nature of Reporting Relationship – The IGA, as amended, specifies that "[e]ach Inspector General shall report to and be under the general supervision of the head of the establishment [or designated federal entity]..." (Sections 3(a) and 8(d)). It would be helpful to clarify what is meant by "general supervision." Perhaps changing that phrase to add the word "administrative supervision" or adding "for administrative purposes only" at the end of that sentence would suffice. Since the passage of the IGA in 1978, it has been my experience that a number of disputes between an agency and its IG have centered on the meaning of "general supervision." Clarifying that matter would enhance the independence of IGs who have been faced with those arguments.

Enhancing OIG Funding

Access to Forfeiture Funds – There currently exists a statutory structure allowing certain agencies to create, maintain, and utilize a forfeiture fund to enhance their investigative activities. With the increasing role of OIGs in federal law enforcement, it would be a great help to OIGs, and a source of funding beyond tax and stamp revenues, to allow OIGs to utilize forfeiture funds in the same manner available to the

5 U.S.C. App. § 6: *In addition to the authority otherwise provided by this Act, each Inspector General is authorized to access and use funds held in any special funds in the same manner as the Federal agency over which that Inspector General has oversight responsibilities, without fiscal year limitation, for the following law enforcement purposes –*

- (i) reimbursement of any Inspector General expenditures associated with the seizure, detention, inventory, maintenance, advertising, selling, or disposing of property under seizure, detention, or forfeiture;*
- (ii) payments to reimburse the Inspector General for investigative costs;*
- (iii) payments made pursuant to guidelines promulgated by the Attorney General if such payments are necessary and directly related to seizure expenses for:*
 - (I) the purchase or lease of automatic data processing systems (not less than a majority of which use will be related to such program);*
 - (II) training;*
 - (III) printing;*
 - (IV) the storage, protection, and destruction of controlled substances; and*
 - (V) contracting for services directly related to the identification of forfeitable assets; and*
- (iv) the payment for expenditures associated with crime prevention campaigns.*

Independence of Budget Process for non-Treasury Fund Appropriations – The budget justification process of OMB provides the important mechanism by which the Executive Branch controls its overall budget. However, a number of OIGs receive funding from their independently funded parent agencies, which are not included in that budget. With the Reform Act, some OIGs have been included in the Executive Branch process by OMB, despite their independent source of funding. For example, the Postal Service OIG is now an “appropriated” entity, but the funds it receives come from the Postal Fund. The budget justification process through OMB for the Postal Service is different than for those agencies with congressional appropriations, as they do not directly impact the federal budget. Nevertheless, OMB has taken the position that the Postal Service OIG must participate in the full OMB budget justification process. I don’t believe that this is what was intended by the changes to the IGA and with postal reform. (See the Postal Reform Act of 2003.)

For those OIGs funded outside the federal budget, the rationale for including their budgets in the Executive Branch process is unclear. The Government Accountability Office has determined that appropriated funds retain the character of the source of those funds, so that restrictions with respect to fiscal year characterization apply equally to the independent source and the appropriated funds from that source. To help clarify this determination, and to simplify the budgeting process for non-Treasury Fund OIGs, I

suggest adding a provision to the IG Reform Act, following 5 U.S.C. App. 3 § 6(f)(3), to state:

(f)(4) In addition to the requirements above, the budget for each Office of Inspector General shall be subject to the same budget justification and approval process to which its parent agency is subject.

If you have any further questions related to this matter, your staff may contact Wally Olihovik, Stakeholder Relations, at (703) 248-2100.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David C. Williams".

David C. Williams
Inspector General



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As we noted in our response last year, our office categorizes its recommendations as either "significant" or "non-significant." Significant recommendations require OIG concurrence with the corrective actions management has taken before they may be closed, and are the only ones we track. As a result, the enclosed information pertains to significant recommendations only.

As of March 31, 2010, there were 156 open and unimplemented recommendations, 53 of which had an estimated monetary impact totaling over \$4 billion. Additionally, since January 5, 2009, our office has deemed 240 recommendations accepted and implemented by the Postal Service. Enclosed is a list of (a) the 53 open significant recommendations with their associated cost savings and (b) our three most important open and unimplemented recommendations.

We are providing suggestions on improvements to the Inspector General Act of 1978 and the Inspector General Reform Act of 2008 under separate cover. If you have any further questions related to this matter, your staff may contact Wally Olihovik, Stakeholder Relations, at (703) 248-2100.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Tammy L. Whitcomb".

Tammy L. Whitcomb
Assistant Inspector General
for Audit

Enclosures

**U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General Open Significant Recommendations with
Monetary Impact as of March 31, 2010**

#	Report Title	Recommendation	Date Recommended	Monetary Impact Amount
1	Efficiency of the Los Angeles International Service Center; NO-AR-05-011	Reduce mail-processing workhours by 85,000.	6/17/2005	\$26,075,474
2	Postal Service's Injury Compensation Programs' Controversion and Challenge Process in Selected Areas; HM-AR-06-004	Provide sufficient oversight of injury compensation control offices by including steps to validate the proper tracking and monitoring of controverted and challenged claims in the Human Resource Information System and the Claim Control Register in their Area Program reviews.	5/19/2006	108,591
3	New York International Service Center – Inbound International Mail; FT-AR-08-005	Establish and communicate policies and procedures to address the complete processing and billing cycle for inbound international mail.	1/24/2008	13,700,604
4	Leased Facility Maintenance Responsibility in the Great Lakes Area; SA-AR-08-008	Require the Great Lakes Facilities Service Office to collect the \$62,625 in recoverable supported questioned costs.	7/23/2008	117,111
5	Powered Industrial Vehicle Management System at the Louisville, Kentucky Processing and Distribution Center; NO-AR-09-001	Ensure the Powered Industrial Vehicle Management System at the Louisville P&DC functions as intended and produces efficiency improvements.	12/3/2008	1,970,108
6	Radio Frequency Identification Technology: Asset Management; DA-AR-09-002	Explore opportunities to employ radio frequency identification technology to reduce the amount of losses in pallet inventories.	12/24/2008	126,791,426 ¹
7	The Postal Service's Certification Process for Non-Mail Freight Transportation Invoices ; CA-AR-09-002	Develop and implement written procedures for the independent review of invoices to confirm the receipt of goods and services, and to ensure accurate payment.	2/18/2009	41,916,714
8	Management of City Letter Carriers' Street Performance; DR-MA-09-001	Deploy additional Global Positioning System technology for 400 motorized city routes in the Chicago District for more effective monitoring and tracking during street delivery.	3/26/2009	1,040,235

¹ Postal Service management cannot implement this recommendation due to their capital budget freeze.

**U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General Open Significant Recommendations with
Monetary Impact as of March 31, 2010**

#	Report Title	Recommendation	Date Recommended	Monetary Impact Amount
9	Custodial Maintenance: New York District; DA-AR-09-007	Update staffing packages to eliminate duplication in cleaning operations, to include an adjustment of cleaning frequencies as determined by local conditions.	4/7/2009	38,490,629
10	Custodial Maintenance: New York District; DA-AR-09-007;	Review the benefits of extending contract eligibility to larger postal facilities for inclusion in the next collective bargaining agreement beginning Nov. 21, 2010, and subsequently utilize contract staffing to fill custodial positions lost through attrition.	4/7/2009	9,777,316
11	Assessment of Overall Plant Efficiency; NO-MA-09-002	Reduce 22.9 million workhours by FY 2011 with an associated economic impact of \$969 million.	5/8/2009	969,495,708
12	Postal Service Mail Processing Equipment's Ability To Read Postage On First-Class TM Letters; MS-AR-09-008	Use Limited Duty and Light Duty personnel to assist with identifying and processing shortpaid and unpaid letters.	5/28/2009	244,195,495 ²
13	Postal Service Mail Processing Equipment's Ability To Read Postage On First-Class TM Letters; MS-AR-09-008	Re-evaluate the phosphorescence coding methodology to include raising the coding denomination from the 10 cent stamp to the current First-Class TM card postage. This modification should be considered for upcoming Advanced Facer Cancellor System deployments.	5/28/2009	244,195,495 ¹
14	Postal Service Mail Processing Equipment's Ability To Read Postage On First-Class TM Letters; MS-AR-09-008	Determine the causes of shortpaid and overpaid Postage Validation Imprinter labels on First-Class letters and develop awareness training for retail employees.	5/28/2009	24,054,193
15	Vehicle Maintenance Facilities Scheduled Maintenance – National Capping Report; DR-AR-09-007	Establish an effective process for ensuring vehicle maintenance facility management and vehicle post office management include all contract and repair maintenance costs in the Vehicle Maintenance Accounting System or its replacement.	6/30/2009	40,505,382

² This amount is evenly attributable to the applicable recommendations.

**U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General Open Significant Recommendations with
Monetary Impact as of March 31, 2010**

#	Report Title	Recommendation	Date Recommended	Monetary Impact Amount
16	Postal Vehicle Service Transportation – Philadelphia Bulk Mail Center; NL-AR-09-005	Phase out the additional 8,750 postal vehicle service workhours that management agreed were in excess of the workload.	7/17/2009	3,045,255
17	Powered Industrial Vehicle Management System at the Oakland Processing and Distribution Center; NO-AR-09-007	Use the Powered Industrial Vehicle Management System to the fullest extent possible to manage operations and continue to improve mail processing efficiency by reducing 38,000 workhours in tow and forklift operations by FY 2011, with an associated economic impact of over \$14.5 million present value dollars in savings occurring over 10 years.	7/23/2009	14,598,866
18	Air Networks – Federal Express Transportation Agreement – Southeast Area; NL-AR-09-007	Use surface transportation to the extent possible for mail that does not require air transportation to meet Postal Service on-time standards.	7/31/2009	39,528,689
19	Air Networks – Federal Express Transportation Agreement – Southeast Area; NL-AR-09-007	Transport mail to the maximum extent possible using the service-responsive capacity of passenger airlines under contract with the Postal Service.	7/31/2009	2,795,552
20	Air Networks – Federal Express Transportation Agreement – Southeast Area; NL-AR-09-007	Sort mail into bypass containers as appropriate.	7/31/2009	9,693,125
21	Fuel Management Initiatives for Surface Network Operations – Fuel Purchasing Strategy; NL-MA-09-001	Ensure appropriate allocation of contracting, operational, and financial resources at all levels to support the timely implementation of the National Fuel Purchasing Strategy.	8/5/2009	4,000,000 ³
22	Fuel Management Initiatives for Surface Network Operations – Fuel Purchasing Strategy; NL-MA-09-001	Ensure adequate consideration of project management principles and best practices outlined in the report in planning and implementing the National Fuel Purchasing Strategy, including development of a project management plan, which includes project goals, performance measures, baselines and target dates, changes to target dates, and documented reasons for changes.	8/5/2009	4,000,000 ²

³ The monetary impact for this project was not attributable to one specific recommendation; therefore, we allocated the impact evenly to each recommendation.

**U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General Open Significant Recommendations with
Monetary Impact as of March 31, 2010**

#	Report Title	Recommendation	Date Recommended	Monetary Impact Amount
23	Fuel Management Initiatives for Surface Network Operations -- Fuel Purchasing Strategy; NL-MA-09-001	Develop a risk mitigation plan to address major project risks to help achieve the stated goals of the National Fuel Purchasing Strategy.	8/5/2009	4,000,000 ²
24	Fuel Management Initiatives for Surface Network Operations -- Fuel Purchasing Strategy; NL-MA-09-001	Develop measurement factors to monitor achievement of the stated goals of the National Fuel Purchasing Strategy, and consider including these factors as part of the National Performance Assessment plan as appropriate.	8/5/2009	4,000,000 ²
25	Custodial Maintenance: Nationwide; DA-AR-09-011	Update staffing packages to eliminate duplication in cleaning operations, including an adjustment of cleaning frequencies as determined by local conditions.	8/13/2009	848,628,448
26	Custodial Maintenance: Nationwide; DA-AR-09-011	Conduct a Lean Six Sigma process improvement initiative in conjunction with the American Postal Workers Union to identify non-value tasks in the current custodial standard and negotiate revisions.	8/13/2009	147,959,767
27	Sunday Mail Processing Operations; NO-AR-09-012	Reduce 83,000 workhours, based on FY 2008 usage, by the end of FY 2010 with an associated economic impact of approximately \$38 million over a 10-year period.	9/25/2009	38,250,365
28	Delivery Vehicle Fuel Management; DR-AR-09-009	Consider as part of the Postal Service's National Fuel Purchasing Strategy expansion of mobile fueling for city and rural delivery units with 30 or more routes using Postal Service-owned vehicles, as well as other delivery units as necessary.	9/28/2009	23,208,175
29	Management of Delivery Point Sequencing Percentage Increases for City Delivery -- Nationwide Review; DR-AR-09-010	Require district officials to prioritize and execute tasks, such as updating address databases, monitoring and removing M-records, identifying and resolving sortation issues, and handling non-Delivery Point Sequencing mail in their delivery units.	9/28/2009	66,314,595 ⁴

⁴ The monetary impact for this project was not attributable to one specific recommendation; therefore, we allocated the impact evenly to each recommendation.

**U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General Open Significant Recommendations with
Monetary Impact as of March 31, 2010**

#	Report Title	Recommendation	Date Recommended	Monetary Impact Amount
30	Management of Delivery Point Sequencing Percentage Increases for City Delivery – Nationwide Review; DR-AR-09-010	Develop and execute an action plan to mitigate low city Delivery Point Sequencing percentages in delivery units.	9/28/2009	66,314,595 ⁵
31	Management of Delivery Point Sequencing Percentage Increases for City Delivery – Nationwide Review; DR-AR-09-010	Ensure accountability of Delivery Point Sequencing (DPS) Improvement Team members for completing assigned tasks to increase and sustain city delivery DPS percentages and reduce operating costs.	9/28/2009	66,314,595 ⁵
32	Fuel Management Consumption Strategies for Surface Network Operations; NL-AR-09-010	Assess and implement all opportunities for owned, leased, and contracted vehicles to use technology to reduce wind resistance and identify the most viable advanced aerodynamics options consistent with industry best practices and adjust contracts as appropriate to account for the reduced fuel need.	9/30/2009	335,904,461
33	Fuel Management Consumption Strategies for Surface Network Operations; NL-AR-09-010	Establish and implement tire inflation maintenance requirements for its owned heavy-duty vehicle fleet, as well as its leased, and contracted vehicles consistent with industry best practices and adjust contracts as appropriate to account for the reduced fuel need.	9/30/2009	28,290,622
34	Air Networks – Chicago O'Hare Airport Mail Center Operations; NL-AR-09-011	Enforce existing productivity standards for the sack sorter operation and establish and enforce appropriate productivity standards for the platform operation to reduce workhours and increase efficiency.	9/30/2009	1,749,968 ⁵
35	Air Networks – Chicago O'Hare Airport Mail Center Operations; NL-AR-09-011	Provide adequate supervision over the sack sorter and platform operations to include ensuring that volume and workhour reporting requirements are followed.	9/30/2009	1,749,968 ⁵

⁵ This amount is evenly attributable to the applicable recommendations.

**U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General Open Significant Recommendations with
Monetary Impact as of March 31, 2010**

#	Report Title	Recommendation	Date Recommended	Monetary Impact Amount
36	Air Networks – Chicago O'Hare Airport Mail Center Operations; NL-AR-09-011	Ensure staff is scheduled commensurate with the mail flow and volume for Express Mail and Automated Package Processing System operations and adjust operational workhours accordingly.	9/30/2009	3,544,507 ⁶
37	Air Networks – Chicago O'Hare Airport Mail Center Operations; NL-AR-09-011	Provide adequate levels of supervision for Express Mail and Automated Package Processing System operations and ensure employees properly charge their workhours to the correct operations.	9/30/2009	3,544,507 ⁶
38	Use of the Carrier Optimal Routing System; DR-AR-10-001	(a) Select and train at least four individuals as COR system Subject Matter Experts as mandated by Postal Service Headquarters; (b) Complete the Data Preparation Process to include using current PS Forms 3999, Inspection of the Letter Carrier Route; and (c) Complete all route adjustments using the COR system.	10/15/2009	323,158,121
39	Use of No-Fee Money Orders Follow Up Audit; FF-AR-10-033	Provide training to retail associates and local unit management on use of reason codes, payment processes, and closeout procedures.	12/4/2009	1,609,979 ⁶
40	Use of No-Fee Money Orders Follow Up Audit; FF-AR-10-033	Reinforce procedures regarding the proper use of no-fee money orders in ready accessible messaging to sales and service associates.	12/4/2009	1,609,979 ⁶
41	Use of No-Fee Money Orders Follow Up Audit; FF-AR-10-033	Create a change in Point of Service to require supervisory approval in order for a no-fee money order to be issued, or develop other controls that would enhance supervisory oversight of the issuance of no-fee money orders.	12/4/2009	1,609,979 ⁶
42	Use of No-Fee Money Orders Follow Up Audit; FF-AR-10-033	Instruct local units to maintain supporting documentation for no-fee money order transactions for the required retention period.	12/4/2009	25,895

⁶ This amount is evenly attributable to the applicable recommendations.

**U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General Open Significant Recommendations with
Monetary Impact as of March 31, 2010**

#	Report Title	Recommendation	Date Recommended	Monetary Impact Amount
43	City Delivery Efficiency Reviews San Francisco Napoleon Street Station; DR-AR-10-002	Reduce workhours by 54,975 at the Napoleon Street Station by the end of FY 2014, with an associated economic impact of more than \$21.3 million over 10 years.	12/18/2009	21,308,433
44	Postal Service Vehicle Service Transportation Routes Cardiss Collins Processing and Distribution Center; NL-AR-10-002	Eliminate 43,264 workhours already agreed to by local and area management from postal vehicle service trip schedules.	12/28/2009	17,311,954
45	Postal Service Absenteeism; HIM-AR-10-001	Provide refresher training to supervisors to ensure they are aware of unscheduled leave policies and procedures and the importance to follow them.	2/18/2010	1,989,906 ⁷
46	Postal Service Absenteeism; HIM-AR-10-001	Establish and implement internal controls to evaluate and ensure supervisor's compliance with unscheduled leave policies and procedures (for example, performance and accountability measures of periodic management reviews).	2/18/2010	1,989,906 ⁷
47	Review of the Dallas Processing and Distribution Center Outgoing Mail Consolidation; NO-AR-10-003	Consolidate the Dallas Processing and Distribution Center (P&DC) outgoing mail operation into the North Texas P&DC by FY 2011. This will result in an annual savings of \$11,997,208 for a total economic impact of \$114,041,172 over 10 years.	2/24/2010	114,041,172
48	Highway Contract Route Transportation -- Greater Chicago; NL-AR-10-003	Verify elimination of the 42 trips within the identified highway contract routes, already agreed to by local and area management.	3/1/2010	1,715,413
49	Highway Contract Route Transportation -- Greater Chicago; NL-AR-10-003	Reassess the remaining 20 trips, and cancel or modify the trips as indicated by the reassessment, or document the reasons for retaining the trips.	3/1/2010	1,489,981
50	Vending Operations Closure and Financial Risk; FF-MA-10-001	Identify and deposit all undeposited cash associated with the vending accountabilities.	3/10/2010	16,742

⁷ The monetary impact for this project was not attributable to one specific recommendation; therefore, we allocated the impact evenly to each recommendation.

**U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General Open Significant Recommendations with
Monetary Impact as of March 31, 2010**

#	Report Title	Recommendation	Date Recommended	Monetary Impact Amount
51	Postal Service Christmas Rural Delivery Operations; DR-AR-10-003	Eliminate the supplemental Christmas Overtime Pay Provision, Article 9.2(k), set forth in the NRLCA Agreement expiring in November 2010 and any subsequent NRLCA agreements.	3/16/2010	2,955,524
52	Powered Industrial Vehicle Management System at the Indianapolis Processing and Distribution Center; NO-AR-10-004	Use the PIVMS to the fullest extent possible to manage operations and continue to improve mail processing efficiency by reducing 20,000 workhours in tow and forklift operations by FY 2013.	3/29/2010	7,913,246
53	Continuing Use of Carrier Sequence Barcode Sorter Machines at Delivery Units; DR-AR-10-004	Reduce 10 carrier sequence barcode sorters at selected associate offices as well as the associated workhours.	3/31/2010	3,011,956
Total				\$4,001,628,727

**U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General Three Most Important Open and
Unimplemented Recommendations as of March 31, 2010**

Report Title	Recommendation	Date Recommended	Recommendation Status	Estimated Monetary Impact	Targeted Implementation Date
Assessment of Overall Plant Efficiency; Report Number NO-MA-09-002	Reduce 22.9 million workhours by FY 2011 with an associated economic impact of \$969 million.	5/8/2009	Agree	\$969,495,708	October 2012
Custodial Maintenance: Nationwide; Report Number DA-AR-09-011	Update staffing packages to eliminate duplication in cleaning operations, including an adjustment of cleaning frequencies as determined by local conditions.	8/13/2009	Agree	\$848,628,448	April 2010
Fuel Management Consumption Strategies for Surface Network Operations; Report Number NL-AR-09-010	Assess and implement all opportunities for owned, leased, and contracted vehicles to use technology to reduce wind resistance and identify the most viable advanced aerodynamics options consistent with industry best practices and adjust contracts as appropriate to account for the reduced fuel need.	9/30/2009	Agree	\$335,904,461	September 2010